

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6284



**LINCOLN MEMORIAL
INSCRIPTION TO COMMEMORATE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR'S
"I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH
PRELIMINARY AND FINAL SITE DESIGN PLANS
Constitution Avenue and Bacon Drive, NW, Washington, D.C.**

Submission by the National Park Service

January 9, 2003

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site design plans pursuant to Public Law 106-365 and the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 8905(a)).

Commission Action

The Commission **approves** the preliminary and final site design plans for an inscription to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial, Constitution Avenue and Bacon Drive, NW, Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.44(38.00)-41121.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

D. Hamilton
NCPC File No. 6284



**LINCOLN MEMORIAL
PLAQUE TO COMMEMORATE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR'S
"I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH
PRELIMINARY AND FINAL SITE DESIGN PLANS
Constitution Avenue and Bacon Drive, NW, Washington, D.C.**

Submission by the National Park Service

January 2, 2003

Abstract

The National Park Service has submitted the design plans for an inscription at the Lincoln Memorial to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. The Commission previously approved a location for this commemoration at the exact spot where Dr. King delivered the speech.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final site design plans pursuant to Public Law 106-365 and the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 8905(a)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission **approves** the preliminary and final site design plans for the plaque to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial, Constitution Avenue and Bacon Drive, NW, Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.44(38.00)-41121.

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

- The National Park Service (NPS) has submitted preliminary and final site design plans for an inscription that commemorates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial. The proposal is being initiated as a result of Public Law 106-365, which directs that the Secretary of the Interior insert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial a suitable plaque to commemorate the speech of Dr. King. The proposal would provide:
- An inscription, which states: I HAVE A DREAM; MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.; THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM; AUGUST 28, 1963.
- The commemorative words would be inscribed in one of the existing granite panels on the spot where Dr. King delivered the speech. It would require a space approximately 7 inches wide and 20.3 inches long.
- The I HAVE A DREAM portion of the inscription would have 2-inch high letters; MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR, 1-inch high letters; and the remaining THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM, AUGUST 28, 1963 would have 0.8-inch high letters.
- The inscribed letters would be engraved into the stone, approximately 3/8" deep, have a "V" cut, and unfilled with any coloring material.
- The inscription would be oriented eastward so that when visitors read the inscription they will be facing in the same direction as Dr. King when he delivered the speech. The view would be towards the Reflecting Pool, Washington Monument, and the Mall beyond.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Applicant: NPS
Architect: NPS
Square Footage: Approximately 2 square feet.
Estimated Cost: \$20,000
Schedule: Completion in August 2003 (40th Anniversary of event)

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

At its September 5, 2002 meeting, the Commission disapproved Site Location "4a" for a plaque that commemorates Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. This location would have placed the plaque at the lower terrace level of the Lincoln Memorial near the Alaska-Hawaii commemorative stone.

The Commission further recommended that the plaque be placed at the exact spot where Dr. King gave his speech at the Lincoln Memorial. Finally, the Commission also recommended that as the NPS developed the design of the plaque, that it be oriented eastward, facing the Reflecting Pool, Washington Monument and the Mall beyond to recall the view that Dr. King had when he gave the “I Have a Dream” speech.

EVALUATION

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary and final site design plans for the proposed inscription:

- The proposal is consistent with previous actions and directions given by the Commission when it reviewed the site location for the plaque.
- It is located on the spot where Dr. King delivered the speech.
- It is oriented eastward to replicate the view that Dr. King had.
- It would not adversely impact pedestrian circulation.
- The overall size is large enough to be readable, but will not compete with the overall experience of the Lincoln Memorial.
- It would not have an adverse effect on the National Register qualities of the Lincoln Memorial.

The proposal is well executed and the inscription should be a comfortable addition to the overall fabric of the Lincoln Memorial. NPS advises that it will have the inscription completed in August 2003, in time for the 40th anniversary of Dr. King’s speech.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on December 11, 2002 and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were NCPC; the Fire Department; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the District Department of Transportation; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

*CONFORMANCE*Comprehensive Plan

The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. The Parks, Open Space and Natural Features Element designates the Lincoln Memorial area as a Monumental and Decorative Area. The Preservation and Historic Features element indicates that:

The distinguishing original quality or character of Historic properties should be protected. The removal or alteration of any historically valuable material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible and kept to a minimum when required for continued use.

The proposal for the inscription is consistent with this policy in that it will have a minimum effect on the distinguishing original quality and character of the Lincoln Memorial.

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS has received the concurrence of the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer, by letter dated December 3, 2002, that the proposed inscription in the stone of the terrace level of the Lincoln Memorial (as proposed in the submission to the commission) to commemorate Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech would not have an adverse effect on the National Register qualities of the Lincoln Memorial.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NPS has reviewed the potential environmental effects of the proposed action. In accordance with the NPS Environmental Compliance Guide, Section 3.4(C), the proposed new commemorative plaque is Categorically Excluded.